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Guthrie, William Dameron

Remarks of
William D. Guthrie...

[New York]

[1921]

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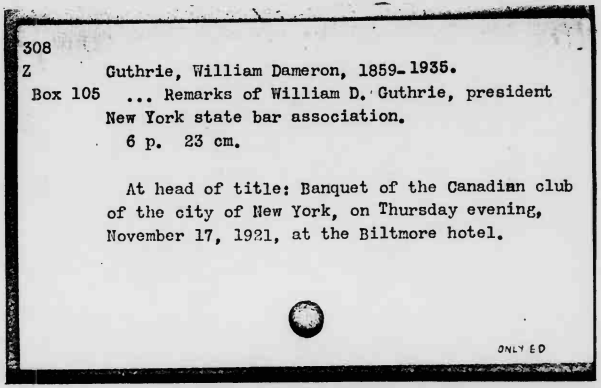

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BANQUET

OF THE

CANADIAN CLUB OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK

ON

THURSDAY EVENING, NOVEMBER 17, 1921,

AT

THE BILTMORE HOTEL

REMARKS

OF

WILLIAM D. GUTHRIE

PRESIDENT NEW YORK STATE BAR ASSOCIATION

QB May 5, 1922

REMARKS OF WILLIAM D. GUTHRIE,
PRESIDENT NEW YORK STATE BAR ASSOCIATION,

AT

BANQUET OF THE CANADIAN CLUB OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK, ON THURSDAY EVENING, NOVEMBER 17, 1921, AT THE BILTMORE.

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen of the
Canadian Club of the City of New York.

On behalf and in the name of the New York State Bar Association, I thank you for the privilege of joining in this tribute to the distinguished advocate and King's Counsel who is the principal guest of honor at this interesting banquet. We have known of Sir James Aikens as one of the leaders of the Canadian Bar, as President of the Canadian Bar Association and as Lieutenant Governor of the Province of Manitoba, which is so close a neighbor of the United States, and we are now glad to welcome him in the metropolis of the United States. The Bar Association, of which I have the honor to be President, hopes that Sir James will be able to accept our invitation to attend its annual meeting in January.

When your President, Mr. Oliver, invited me to join in this tribute, I hesitated to accept, and I stated to him as the reason that professional and public engagements would prevent my preparing anything that would be worthy of this audience or would fittingly express the spirit of professional fraternity that should exist between the Bar of Canada and the Bar of the United

States. I know of no more interesting or inspiring subject. Here we stand shoulder to shoulder on this great continent, blessed with the same traditions and the same heritage of the common law, of representative government, of civil liberty and of sound principles of political justice, and with a common duty and a common responsibility to defend these institutions as established by our common forefathers by so much effort and sacrifice.

Every tie that can bind one people to another binds the American people to the Canadians. Most of us on both sides of the line are of the Anglo-Saxon race. To most of us Americans, as to all Canadians, the Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland has ever been the mother country. Your Magna Carta is our Magna Carta. The quickening spirit of such a reunion as this finds its expression in the beautiful anthem which you have just been singing and a few lines of which I shall venture to repeat:

"One race of ancient fame,
One tongue, one faith we claim,
One God, whose glorious name
We love and praise."

The Canadians and ourselves speak the same language, read the same literature, have the same ideals and standards of moral conduct, are governed by substantially the same principles of politics and jurisprudence, entertain the same fundamental conceptions of right and wrong and of justice among men and among nations. Indeed, no two nations in the world have any such essential identity of race, tradition, history, form of government, civic and economic problems, language and surrounding circumstances, nor so many ties binding them to each other as have the United States and Canada. And that these beneficent identities and ties shall endure unimpaired for many centuries, Mr. President and Sir James, ought to be the fervent prayer of all.

I have long been profoundly convinced of the importance of closer relations between the Bars of the two countries, as well as between the two peoples. For many years, the talented and patriotic Permanent Secretary of our Bar Association has been urging upon the attention of the profession all over the United States the duty of cultivating more intimate relations with the Bar of Canada in order that the profession may exert the influence of right it should exert. I refer to Mr. Frederick E. Wadhams of Albany, who is with us tonight at this table. He has rendered and is constantly rendering a really valuable and fruitful public service in promoting a sound entente between the two Bars, and he is justly held in high esteem therefor by our profession on both sides of the boundary line.

We are, indeed, co-trustees of a common heritage, history and tradition which we of the Bar believe to be very sacred and very precious, and well worth giving all that is in us to perpetuate. Indeed, the hope of the future of Democracy and free representative governments lies in having competent and trained leadership and statesmanship on this great continent on both sides of the line; and it is no exaggeration to assert that the necessary training, leadership and statesmanship will generally have to be found, if at all, in the legal profession. Lawyers in the United States as in Canada and England have ever been the champions of the rights and

privileges and liberties of the people and their safest leaders.

The future of civilization throughout the world seems to be full of darkness. It is, therefore, of infinite importance to humanity that we of North America should maintain the highest standards of wise, enlightened and conservative government, of public service, of unselfish sacrifice, so that the whole world may resort to these standards for guidance and inspiration.

Eight years ago, shortly before the breaking out of the World War, the American Bar Association held its annual meeting in Montreal. We were greeted with a most cordial welcome by the eloquent Prime Minister of Canada, Sir Robert Laird Borden, who is now the able representative of Canada at the Washington Conference on the Limitation of Armament. He spoke of the many ties of common kinship, common traditions, common form of government, comradeship and neighborliness that united us. I cannot find a better way to express the thought that is tonight in my own mind and convey it to you than to recall two of his pregnant and inspiring sentences. He said: "May the national life of each country be so guided that, while emulating each other in the development and conservation of our natural resources, in the growth and prosperity of our industries and our commerce and in every legitimate walk and field of national activity, we may find example from each other of much that is good and little that is evil." And then, after poetically referring to the many streams on both sides of the boundary line that flow to mingle their waters in mighty rivers, he added: "So may the ideals and aspirations of the two nations flow in a gracious stream

of friendship and peace during all the glorious years of the future." And these noble words of Sir Robert found ready echo in our hearts.

But above all, gentlemen, I regret that I have not had the leisure to prepare a fitting tribute to what Canada did in the World War. I hardly dare trust myself even to refer to the noblest and the most truly glorious page in the history of Canada. It is a splendid record of heroism and achievement: 500,000 soldiers sent abroad, with a roll of 2885 officers and 53,514 privates killed, and it constitutes an imperishable monument of valor, heroism and sacrifice that will inspire men to noble and unselfish effort for many generations. They wrote high in the glorious record of human grandeur the splendid and heroic showing made at Ypres, at Vimy Ridge, and on so many other battlefields! I am very proud as a lawyer to read on that glorious page the names of many heroic Canadian lawyers, some of whom I knew, who, with gladness in their noble hearts, willingly sacrificed their lives in the holy cause. Long is the magnificent and heroic list of their names written indelibly on what Milton called in his immortal poem "the book of life."

For three anxious and awful years, we Americans envied the just praise and glory that was Canada's. For three years we looked on while the Canadians were making the supreme effort and the supreme sacrifice. No nation, small or great, has ever been grander or nobler than when Canada threw herself into the frightful, and what seemed to many, the hopeless struggle. She will never truly merit higher renown than when she staked her all in defense of England, of Europe, and of our common Christian civilization—than when she unselfishly and

heroically faced destruction and misery, and showed again, on such a lofty and noble scale, that the spirit of the Light Brigade at Balaclava still lives in Canada:

"Their's not to reason why,
Their's but to do and die."

And, gentlemen, in those dark and anxious days, which we can hardly recall without tears, millions of Americans south of the boundary line, whatever other emotions they may have had in looking with beating hearts upon the heroic valor of Canada on the battlefields of Flanders and France, felt prouder than ever before to belong to the same race.

Finally, is it not our plain duty to resolve, by the God of our common forefathers, that your dead and our dead shall not have died in vain? Such a pledge can be fulfilled only if we of this continent, Americans and Canadians alike, stand together, united, shoulder to shoulder, for right and justice, and collaborate unselfishly to secure and maintain the blessings that must flow from a just and lasting peace and from wise, just and equal laws impartially administered.

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